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Goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Summary

The present report is an addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/62/61-E/2007/7), and is submitted in accordance with resolution 45/2 of the Commission for Social Development. It elaborates on goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the areas of globalization, poverty, hunger and education and employment and discusses the bases for the selection of the proposed goals and targets.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 45/2, the Commission for Social Development requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with organizations, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to identify goals and targets regarding the cluster of the World Programme of Action for Youth named "youth and the global economy" and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, as an addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

2. To facilitate the preparation of the present report, the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs convened from 30 to 31 May 2007 in New York an inter-agency expert group meeting on the topic of goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy, bringing together experts from various organizations of the United Nations system and academia, as well as representatives from youth organizations.

3. The present report is based on the outcomes of the inter-agency expert group meeting. It addresses priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond included in the cluster "youth and the global economy", namely globalization, poverty, hunger and education and employment, and suggests some specific goals and targets to monitor progress in these areas. Policy recommendations are provided in the concluding part of the report.

II. Monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy

A. Need for goals and targets on youth

4. The youth development agenda received major impetus through the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth in 1995. The World Programme of Action for Youth represents an unprecedented initiative by the international community to recognize the value of youth as both a major human resource and as key agents for social change and economic development, and to bring the need to address obstacles to their development to the fore. It provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national and international action to improve the lives of young people worldwide. Recent regional initiatives, such as the African Youth Charter, the European Youth Pact and the Ibero-American Convention on Youth Rights have further energized the youth development agenda. Yet, while the World Programme of Action for Youth and these regional initiatives have been instrumental in guiding the formulation and implementation of national youth policies, they do not provide guidelines to assess the progress made towards achieving the broad goals outlined in these documents. The existence of concrete benchmarks in the form of specific goals and time-bound targets may facilitate shaping and clarifying the youth development agenda at both the national and international levels, and provide better opportunities to assess national progress.

5. The goals and targets presented in the Millennium Development Goals framework are a good starting point for identifying goals and targets for youth development. However, while the issues addressed by the Millennium Development Goals relate to the entire population, including youth, they do not focus specifically on many of the issues that impinge directly on youth development. Youth, as a part

of the general population, clearly benefit from society-wide improvements in the context of the Millennium Development Goals. However, youth represent a specific socio-demographic group with its own, and sometimes unique, challenges. Addressing a range of acute issues on the youth development agenda and assessing results of policy interventions is an opportunity to improve policy making, making it more relevant and effective. To seize this opportunity, there is a need for a concerted effort to lay out a vision for youth development, including identifying concrete goals and measurable targets.

B. Developing relevant goals and targets: key assumptions

6. The first challenge is the need to determine forward-looking, yet realistic goals and targets. The goals and targets proposed in this report stem from commitments made by Governments, formulated, however, in a manner that makes measurement possible. Goals and targets are selected in the light of availability of reliable data for documenting progress. Unfortunately, the paucity of youth-specific information and age-disaggregated data represents a formidable impediment in this regard. For some priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth, such as globalization, it is challenging to define quantifiable and comparable indicators to inform goal and target setting, while for other priority areas, such as hunger and poverty, for which data have traditionally been collected at the household level, data specific to youth are typically lacking. In addition, data may not exist for subgroups of youth and in the regions and areas where youth development is challenged the most, such as for youth with disabilities, youth in rural areas and youth in conflict and post-conflict regions.

7. Given the uneven impact of globalization on youth across the world, an additional major challenge is to set common, meaningful and realistic targets applicable to all the regions based on the current youth situation. Differences across countries will require that individual countries define contextually relevant intermediate goals and targets that capture the situation on the ground.

8. In defining the youth-specific goals and targets proposed below, a significant effort was made to go beyond existing goals and targets, while at the same time being consistent with them. For example, in some cases, existing Millennium Development Goals and targets were adapted to reflect the need for specific action targeted at youth in these areas.

9. The time frame chosen for achieving the proposed goals and targets is from 2005 to 2015. These starting and end dates were chosen because, on the one hand, they represent the 10 and the 20-year mark since the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth. On the other hand, they are also consistent with the reaffirmation of development commitments at the 2005 World Summit and the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

C. Proposed goals and targets

10. The table below summarizes the proposed goals and targets to monitor the progress of youth in the global economy. The following section elaborates on each of the proposed goals and targets under the four priority areas of globalization, poverty and hunger, education and employment. The report of the Secretary-General

on the follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth (A/62/61-E/2007/7) provides a detailed analysis of the progress made and the constraints that young people face in each of these areas.

11. Although the goals and targets identified in the present report are for the priority areas falling under the cluster "youth and the global economy", it should be emphasized that the priority areas in this cluster are closely related to those in other clusters. Furthermore, areas such as information and communication technology, health, HIV/AIDS, the environment, drug abuse and armed conflict all influence the situation of youth in the global economy. They, however, belong to other clusters of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

Globalization

12. Youth in today's rapidly changing world are better poised than ever before to participate in and benefit from global development. However, youth are also facing new and complex challenges amid evolving global economies. To capture both the potential positive and negative impacts of globalization on youth, two goals are proposed for this priority area. Goal 1 addresses the need to promote opportunities for youth to participate in the global economy, while goal 2 deals with the need to minimize the negative impact of globalization on youth.

13. Opportunities for cultural exchanges and other cross-border educational opportunities have increased with the progress of globalization. They provide avenues for youth to acquire globally marketable skills and gain intercultural exposure. Unfortunately, although globalization has facilitated the movement of goods and capital across national borders, opportunities for people, especially youth, to benefit from international mobility is constrained. Without adequate opportunities for cross-border movement, young people are likely to be excluded from international educational and cultural exchanges that can enhance their knowledge base and facilitate their employability. Target 1.1 therefore recognizes that cross-border educational opportunities and cultural exchanges are important in fostering the personal development of youth and in enhancing their contributions to their national development.

Table 1
Proposed goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth in the global economy

Goals	*Targets*
Globalization	
Goal 1: promote opportunities for youth to participate in the global economy	Target 1.1: by 2015, develop and implement policies and programmes to increase the number of cross-border educational opportunities and cultural exchanges among youth
	Target 1.2: by 2015, increase the number of international agreements for recognition of educational, including vocational, qualifications, based on existing international conventions
	Target 1.3: by 2015, ensure that all young people, including the most vulnerable and marginalized, have access to legal identification
Goal 2: minimize the negative impact of globalization on youth	Target 2.1: between 2005 and 2015, halve the proportion of youth without social protection
	Target 2.2: between 2005 and 2015, increase by 50 per cent, the coverage of social inclusion programmes targeted at marginalized youth, especially young migrants
Poverty and hunger	
Goal 3: eradicate extreme poverty of young women and men	Target 3.1: halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of youth-headed households living in extreme poverty, while ensuring that female youth-headed households are not disproportionately impoverished
	Target 3.2: halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of young women and men without access to water, sanitation, electricity, health care and other basic services
	Target 3.3: ensure that young women and men, through youth organizations, are involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national development and/or poverty reduction strategies
	Target 3.4: halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of youth without adequate shelter or housing
	Target 3.5: between 2005 and 2015, increase by 50 per cent the proportion of young women and men with access to microfinance or other financial services
Goal 4: ensure equitable access to safe and nutritious food for all young women and men	Target 4.1: halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of young women and men suffering from hunger
	Target 4.2: halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of young women and men living without secure access to safe and nutritious food
	Target 4.3: ensure equal access to timely food aid for young women and men in crisis situations

Goals	*Targets*
	Target 4.4: by 2015, develop and implement policies aimed at the provision of information on nutrition and healthy lifestyles
Education	
Goal 5: promote access to quality education and ensure that formal and non-formal education of youth supports lifelong learning and skills development	Target 5.1: achieve universal access to quality basic education and ensure gender equality in education by 2015
	Target 5.2: between 2005 and 2015, increase by 50 per cent the proportion of students completing secondary education
	Target 5.3: by 2015, develop and implement policies to promote the transition to quality post-secondary education, including vocational education and non-formal programmes, and other skill-building opportunities
	Target 5.4: ensure that opportunities for technical and vocational education and skills training are available to all youth by 2015
	Target 5.5: by 2015, develop and implement national systems of quality assurance in education based on internationally agreed upon standards and tools
	Target 5.6: by 2015, increase by two thirds the proportion of young women and men with the ability to use computers and the Internet as a tool for learning and knowledge acquisition
Employment	
Goal 6: increase decent and productive employment opportunities for young women and men	Target 6.1: halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of youth who are neither in education nor in employment
	Target 6.2: halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of employed youth in vulnerable employment
	Target 6.3: by 2015, reduce the gap between youth and adult unemployment rates
Goal 7: in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, develop and implement national strategies for decent and productive work for young women and men	Target 7.1: by 2015, develop and implement national employment policies and legislation that include components addressing the needs of specific vulnerable groups of young people
	Target 7.2: by 2015, develop and implement national policies to promote the transition between education and decent and productive employment
	Target 7.3: by 2015, develop and implement national policies to ensure that information, knowledge and financial services are available to potential youth entrepreneurs

14. Target 1.2 aims to increase the number of international agreements for recognition of educational qualifications, including vocational qualifications. There are six regional United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conventions on the recognition of qualifications (for Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and two European conventions), and one interregional convention (the Mediterranean Convention). UNESCO conventions are aimed at promoting the recognition of academic qualifications for academic purposes, for example, to continue studies at a different institution. Nevertheless, the conventions play a role in ensuring that diplomas are recognized for professional purposes.[1] They thus reduce the obstacles that young people face when they seek employment in countries other than where they obtained their education.

15. Participation in the global economy is closely linked to having legal identification, which is why target 1.3 calls for all young people, including the most vulnerable and marginalized, to have access to legal identification by 2015. Legal identification not only documents a person's nationality, it is also essential for access to education, employment opportunities, health care, financial services and social security. Student and employment mobility hinge on the ability of young people to obtain visas and to travel abroad. Without legal identification, youth are forced to seek clandestine and illegal routes to migrate. However, access to legal identification has a wider importance beyond facilitating participation in the global economy. A young person without a birth certificate or another identification document officially "does not exist". He or she is therefore extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and is invisible in official statistics. Being registered, and thus having one's existence and identity officially recognized, is a fundamental human right, as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Although many countries have national registration systems, marginalized groups are often left out of the system. According to the latest estimates of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), on average 55 per cent of births in the developing world (excluding China) go unregistered each year.[2]

16. A crucial means for minimizing the negative impact of globalization on youth is ensuring that they have access to adequate social protection. A range of social protection instruments, such as unemployment insurance, income support, pensions and health systems, reduce the insecurities associated with globalization and compensate those who lose out from shifts in production associated with globalization. Social protection/social security schemes to help reduce the adverse consequences of globalization and distribute its benefits more fairly within countries are an essential part of any strategy to reduce poverty. The right to social security is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Nevertheless, in most developing countries, social protection systems and institutions are weak and under-resourced. Even in industrialized countries, where coverage of social protection is generally greater, it is far from universal. Those in the informal and rural economies, women, and other marginalized groups are frequently excluded.[3] Recognizing the difficulties involved

[1] See www.unesco.org accessed on 14 June 2007.

[2] See United Nations Children's Fund (2006), *The State of the World's Children 2006. Excluded and Invisible* (Sales No. E.06.XX.1).

[3] See International Labour Office. 2004. *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All.* Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension on Globalization.

in expanding social protection systems in a short time frame, target 2.1 aims to halve the share of youth without social protection by 2015. Ultimately, the objective is to reach universal coverage.

17. Globalization has resulted in growing exclusion and deprivation among marginalized groups of youth. Because of their status or place of residence, these youth have few possibilities to access quality education, decent employment and information and communications technologies. In search of better opportunities, many of them migrate only to find that their situation is little changed in their new home. Low-skilled migrant youth are particularly vulnerable. Not only do they frequently lack the skills to obtain decent employment, their precarious economic and legal situation leaves them vulnerable to exploitation. In addition, those who left their families and friends behind frequently lack social support. To avoid disillusionment and provide protection to these youth and enable them to make a positive contribution to their host countries, a variety of social inclusion measures are needed. Although such programmes exist, the hard to reach are frequently left out. Migrant youth, in particular, are often invisible to social service providers and are unrecognized in national youth programmes in host countries. Target 2.2 therefore aims to increase the coverage of social inclusion programmes targeted at marginalized youth, especially young migrants.

Poverty and hunger

18. Poverty, in its various dimensions, hinders young people's capacity to make a successful transition to adulthood. According to recent estimates, over 200 million young people live on less than one dollar a day and 515 million live on less than two dollars a day. Despite these large numbers of youth living in poverty, little research has been conducted on the poverty characteristics of young people and their movement in and out of poverty. As the *World Youth Report 2005* emphasized, young people in poverty will not be given the attention they deserve in national poverty reduction strategies until their situation is formally acknowledged, they are consulted, and data are available on the nature and extent of their vulnerabilities.[4] Young people face a number of obstacles related to work, living arrangements and personal relationships, which may make them vulnerable to poverty. Recognizing that youth in poverty face unique obstacles implies that poverty reduction strategies for youth require different approaches than those for adults. To ensure that strategies to combat poverty target the large number of young people living in poverty and focus on their specific needs, goal 3 calls for the eradication of extreme poverty of young women and men, in line with the Millennium Development Goal on poverty and hunger.

19. The corresponding target, 3.1, is to halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of youth-headed households living in extreme poverty, while ensuring that female youth-headed households are not disproportionately impoverished. The target focuses on youth-headed households, as opposed to all youth, because poverty is measured at the household level and reliable country data on youth poverty currently do not exist. However, it is hoped that this target will encourage more quantitative and qualitative research on poverty among youth. Households headed by young women face a double disadvantage because of the age and gender of their

[4] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Youth Report 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.IV.6).

head of household. Strategies aimed at reducing youth poverty must therefore pay particular attention to the specific needs and challenges faced by young women.

20. Poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon; not only income level, but also access to services, plays an important role in defining the scale and scope of poverty. In this light, it is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, education and information. Target 3.2 therefore seeks to halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of young women and men without access to water, sanitation, electricity, health care and other basic services. Gender and geographical disparities in access to these services are widespread. Special attention must therefore be paid to improving access of young women, youth living in rural areas and youth living in slums. Youth with disabilities and indigenous youth are also likely to be particularly disadvantaged in access to these services.

21. For various reasons many countries do not give sufficient priority to the needs of young people. Although an increasing number of countries are making some reference to young people in their national development strategies or poverty reduction strategy papers, the initiatives proposed are often piecemeal and therefore limited in terms of scale, scope and potential impact. Youth are frequently overlooked as a major group experiencing poverty, deprivation or exclusion, and, if they are mentioned, it tends to be primarily in the context of education and employment. Although these are key areas influencing young people's well-being and future opportunities, tackling youth poverty requires a more comprehensive approach. Government action plans rarely link youth-focused strategies to specific targets and budget outlays. One of the main reasons for this insufficient focus on youth and the inadequate approaches to tackle youth poverty is the fact that youth-led organizations are frequently not consulted in the drafting of national development strategies. However, through their unique perspectives and experiences, young people can make important contributions to youth policies and development strategies, in both developing and developed countries. Young people also have a role to play in the implementation of national strategies in promoting public awareness and understanding, particularly among their peers. Target 3.3 therefore aims to ensure that young women and men, through youth organizations, are involved in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national development and/or poverty reduction strategies.

22. In both developed and developing countries, many young people live without adequate shelter or housing. Homelessness among youth often reflects household poverty, but it also could be due to family problems, including physical and sexual abuse, addiction of a family member or parental neglect. Some youth become homeless due to financial crises in their families. Others are too old for institutional placements such as foster care and do not receive any housing or income support. Youth living on the street have few legal means to earn sufficient income to meet their basic needs and are vulnerable to various forms of violence, including sexual exploitation. These youth are therefore at greater risk of abuse and of contracting HIV/AIDS.[5] Youth without adequate housing also frequently suffer from severe anxiety and depression, poor health and nutrition and low self-esteem. Lack of adequate shelter and housing not only refers to homeless youth, but also to youth living in overcrowded dwellings or in houses without flooring or an adequate roof.

[5] See National Coalition for the Homeless, *Homeless Youth*, NCH Fact Sheet No. 13 (June 2006).

Lack of adequate shelter of all kinds puts health and educational attainment at risk. Target 3.4 therefore aims to halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of youth without adequate shelter or housing.

23. Access to microfinance (including credit, savings and insurance products) helps avoid poverty by reducing various forms of vulnerability and risks. It is essential for the establishment or growth of enterprises and improves access to education and other basic services. Although youth benefit from these services as much as adults,[6] they are frequently excluded because they are perceived as more risky or more costly to serve. Evidence from organizations providing microfinance to young people in developing countries shows, however, that this is not necessarily the case.[7] Although banks in developed countries are increasingly identifying youth as an important target group, a small but significant proportion of young people in these countries are not able to use financial services due to lack of knowledge or income.[8] In countries where the majority of people have a bank account, those without one face increased transaction costs and social exclusion. Target 3.5 thus reflects the need to increase the proportion of young women and men with access to microfinance or other financial services.

24. An important dimension of youth poverty is lack of access to safe and nutritious food. One in nearly seven people do not have enough food to be healthy and lead an active life, making hunger and malnutrition the number one risk to health worldwide, greater than that of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. The greatest concentrations of undernourished people are in rural areas of developing countries. In line with the Millennium Development Goals, target 4.1 aims at halving the proportion of young women and men suffering from hunger by 2015. Hunger has negative physical, biological and psychological consequences on youth, as the body compensates for lack of energy by slowing down its physical and mental activities. Young people are particularly vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition due to lack of physical or economic access to food. In many cases, youth, particularly young women, do not have the same access to food as older or male members of the household. Regardless, many countries do not focus their efforts to reduce hunger on this age group and do not gather youth-specific data on hunger and malnutrition.

25. Food security means access at all times to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Target 4.2 aims at halving by 2015 the proportion of young women and men living without secure access to safe and nutritious food. In addition to suffering from hunger due to lack of sufficient quantities of food, the food available to poor youth is often of low quality. Particularly in developing countries, micronutrient deficiencies are common among youth and can greatly affect their health, development and survival. Deficiencies of protein, iron, vitamin A and iodine are ranked among the World Health Organization's leading causes of death through disease in developing countries. In developed countries, some youth, particularly those from low-income

[6] While access to credit will mainly be beneficial to older youth, savings services are important for all young people.

[7] See McNulty (2005), *Serving Youth with Microfinance. Perspectives of Microfinance Institutions and Youth Serving Organizations*. USAID.

[8] See Atkinson, *Young people: Avoiding banking exclusion*. Available at www.savings-banks-events.org/atf/Papers.htm (last accessed 29 June 2007).

families, experience hunger and poor nutrition, with the same negative consequences for their physical and psychological development.

26. Target 4.3 calls for equal access to timely food aid for young women and men in crisis situations. In times of conflict or natural disasters, the only means to obtain food is often through provisions by aid agencies. However, in distributing food, priority is frequently given to young children, lactating mothers or other vulnerable members of households. Thus youth in crisis situations, particularly those living on their own or separated from their families, often suffer from hunger.

27. Obesity among youth is becoming one of the major health challenges of the twenty-first century. More children and youth are overweight and obese than ever before, largely due to poor dietary habits and inactivity. While overweight is generally associated with developed countries, it is increasingly prevalent in developing countries, where the incidence is growing especially rapidly among poor households. Obesity during childhood and youth is related to increased morbidity and mortality in later life. Since nutritional habits and outcomes are stable over time, there are significant benefits to intervening during youth when habits are being formed.[9] Target 4.4 thus encourages the development and implementation of policies aimed at providing information on nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

Education

28. In order to harness young people's potential as a major force to shape the present and future of our societies, they must be provided with the information, capacities, resources and opportunities necessary to participate and take action. Quality education, both inside and outside the classroom, is a key determinant of effective participation in the global economy. Learning that occurs outside the formal education system, i.e. non-formal learning, tends not to be well understood or appropriately valued. However, non-formal education helps develop work and life skills that prepare youth for the challenges they will face in a globalized world. It is of particular importance in countries in which large proportions of the population are left out of the formal education system. Youth organizations are important providers of non-formal education to young people. By volunteering and participating in these organizations, youth gain problem-solving and teamwork skills and leadership capacities, and become aware of the benefits of civic engagement. As the economy continues to change and adapt to new innovations and developments, so must skills and knowledge. Lifelong learning has thus become a necessity and its foundations must be laid during youth, through both formal and non-formal education. Goal 5 seeks to promote access to quality education and to ensure that formal and non-formal education of youth supports lifelong learning and skills development.

29. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are prerequisites for participation in the global economy. In recent years, progress in expanding access to basic education, which includes primary and lower secondary education, has been made. However, it is still far from universal and a large proportion of primary school graduates do not make the transition to post-primary education. In most regions, girls and young women continue to have lower levels of educational attainment than their male

[9] See World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation* and the American Obesity Association (obesityusa.org, last accessed 14 June 2007).

peers. Target 5.1 therefore aims at achieving universal access to quality basic education and to ensure gender equality in education by 2015.

30. In the context of globalization, secondary education is fast becoming a prerequisite to participating in the labour market and an increasingly interdependent world. Secondary education provides young people with relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and opportunities to enter the labour market, and provides the essential foundation for the acquisition of new occupational skills over the life cycle. It also prepares youth for adulthood and independence and endows them with social, personal and other life skills that benefit them and the wider community. Dropping out of school predisposes youth to unemployment and low incomes. Target 5.2 therefore aims to increase by 50 per cent the proportion of students completing secondary education between 2005 and 2015.

31. Even when youth complete secondary education, they tend to have difficulties in the transition to further education, partly due to a lack of information available on different options. Youth may also lack knowledge about possibilities of non-formal programmes during "gap years" between secondary and higher education or before starting work. In the past, post-secondary education has received relatively little attention in the youth development agenda, despite its crucial role in providing opportunities for youth. With secondary education becoming a minimum level of education necessary to participate in the global economy, it is of the utmost importance that youth obtain additional relevant skills, be it through tertiary education, training or non-formal education. Target 5.3 seeks to develop and implement policies to promote the transition to quality post-secondary education (including vocational education and non-formal programmes) and other skill-building opportunities.

32. Technical and vocational training is an important bridge between education and the world of work. Vocational skills prepare youth for employment by addressing skill mismatches. They are acquired in the formal education system and through apprenticeships, training provided by employers or technical and vocational education. In the past, technical and vocational education and training was often characterized by rigid and low-quality education disconnected from labour markets. Successful training programmes are flexible and responsive to the needs of the workplace and include links with local businesses or on-the-job training. Gaining technical and vocational skills — and thus the opportunity to engage in income-generating livelihoods — is important for youth, particularly for those who dropped out of school at an early stage and for marginalized and excluded groups of youth. Targeted programmes for disadvantaged youth and programmes that include young people in the informal economy are thus of particular importance. In addition to preparing youth for entry into the labour market, training systems must provide pathways for continual learning over a lifetime in response to changing technologies and global economic requirements.[10] Target 5.4 aims at ensuring that by 2015 all youth have opportunities to obtain technical and vocational skills, if they wish to.

33. While there has been encouraging progress in expanding access to education and years of education, quantity by itself is insufficient. One of the major findings of the forthcoming *World Youth Report 2007* is that even when youth have access to

[10] World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation* (September 2006).

education, it is often of low quality and does not prepare them for the demands of a global economy. Around the world, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, lack of instruction materials and a shortage of well-trained staff hinder youth from obtaining quality education. The cost and shortages of equipment and qualified teaching personnel may also limit the academic options and skills that students can acquire at school. Target 5.5 thus proposes the development and implementation of national systems of quality assurance in education, based on internationally agreed upon standards and tools.

34. In a globalized world, the ability to use computers and the Internet is becoming an increasingly important asset. It facilitates communication, is an inexhaustible source of information and an important tool for learning. The Internet expands learning opportunities, even to remote areas, and promotes innovative teaching methods. However, with over 86 per cent of youth living in developing countries where access to computers, stable power supplies and Internet connections are scarce, the majority of youth are inadequately prepared for further education and work. To reverse existing inequalities arising from disparities in access and know-how of modern information and communications technologies, target 5.6 identifies the need to significantly increase the proportion of young women and men with the ability to use computers and the Internet as a tool for learning and knowledge acquisition.

Employment[11]

35. All over the world, youth are finding it increasingly difficult to enter the labour market. Youth make up 25 per cent of the global working-age population. However, their share in total unemployment is 43.7 per cent, meaning that almost every second unemployed person in the world is between the ages of 15 and 24. A global deficit of decent work opportunities has resulted in a situation in which one out of every three youth in the world is either seeking but unable to find work, has given up the job search entirely or is working but still living on less than two dollars a day. If unemployment or underemployment are experienced at an early age, a person's future employment prospects may be compromised permanently. Failing to integrate young people into the labour market not only affects youth. It also has broader consequences for the future prosperity and development of countries, as well as for social cohesion. Young people who are unable to make the most of their productive potential are prone to marginalization and impoverishment, to idleness and potential attraction to illicit activities and to directing their frustration at the society that created it. Goal 6 therefore calls for increasing decent and productive employment opportunities for young women and men.

36. Over the past decade, youth inactivity rates have increased around the world. A large part of this increase can be explained by a growing number of people staying in full-time education for longer periods of time. However, a significant part is also due to discouraged youth, i.e. young people who feel that searching for a job is a futile effort. If youth become discouraged, they face significant difficulties in reintegrating into the labour force and are in danger of feeling useless or becoming alienated from society. In addition to participation in education and discouragement, youth may be inactive because of disability or engagement in household duties.

[11] This section draws on *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (International Labour Organization, October 2006).

These aspects, in addition to the share of youth who are unemployed, are captured in the so-called NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) rate, which measures the percentage of youth who are neither in education nor employment. It captures the non-utilized labour potential of the youth population. To reduce the waste of human resources and productive potential of youth, target 6.1 aims to halve, between 2005 and 2015, the proportion of youth who are neither in education nor in employment.[12]

37. For many young people who do find employment or livelihoods, working conditions remain poor. They work for long hours, on short-term and/or informal contracts, with low pay and little or no social protection. In many cases, the work young people undertake is hazardous to their health. It is estimated that 125 million youth were among the working poor in 2005. This means that more than 20 per cent of employed youth lived in a household where there was less than one dollar a day available per head. More than half of all young people who worked lived on two dollars a day. Target 6.2 aims at halving the proportion of employed youth in vulnerable employment by 2015. The term "vulnerable employment" refers to inadequate working conditions and to the work of own-account workers, unpaid family labour and others without social protection. It is important to ensure that the target is addressed not simply by moving youth from vulnerable employment and leaving them unemployed, but by creating decent and productive work options for them. Only through decent work do young people have the opportunity to work themselves out of poverty.

38. Youth are more than three times as likely to be unemployed as adults are. To a certain extent, it is natural that young people have higher unemployment rates than adults since they have less work experience, lack job search experience and tend to have fewer networks that provide them with labour market information. The International Labour Organization has estimated that halving the world's youth unemployment rate, and thus bringing it more in line with the adult unemployment rate, while allowing for some natural differences, could have added between US$ 2.2 and US$ 3.5 trillion, or between 4.4 and 7 per cent to global gross domestic product in 2003. Target 6.3 therefore calls for a reduction in the gap between youth and adult unemployment rates. In the light of the significant social and economic benefits of decreasing the gap, countries should strive to come as close to parity as possible. The benefit of targeting the gap between youth and adult unemployment rates (as opposed to simply the youth unemployment rate) is that it allows countries to identify whether their unemployment challenge is youth specific or general and to adjust policies accordingly.

39. Goal 7 encourages the development and implementation of national strategies for decent and productive work for young women and men in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. While goal 6 focuses on labour market outcomes, goal 7 monitors Government commitment to addressing the youth unemployment dilemma. Although Governments have an important responsibility for improving the employment situation of youth, they cannot achieve it by themselves. The private sector is a crucial partner without which sustainable employment creation will not take place. In addition, Governments need to involve youth, represented through

[12] In some countries, a large share of young women are not in school or in employment because they are married. While this may be a personal choice for some, there are many young women who would like to continue their education or work despite being married.

youth-led organizations, in identifying groups in need of special attention, developing innovative approaches and assisting with the implementation of strategies to promote decent and productive work for youth.

40. Target 7.1 seeks to develop and implement national employment policies and legislation that include components addressing the needs of specific vulnerable groups of young people. Since youth are not a homogeneous group, there are certain subgroups that, in addition to being young, face disadvantages that make it more difficult for them to find decent work. Policies must be targeted carefully because the solutions required to address the employment challenges of, for example, youth living in slums will differ from those of youth living in rural areas. Similarly, specific policies are needed to address the employment needs of young women, the youngest among the youth cohort, youth with disabilities, youth from ethnic minorities or youth who have experienced armed conflict.

41. The transition from school to work is one of the key stages of a person's life, which determines his or her future economic and social well-being. Transitions from school to work tend not to be straightforward, but rather multi-stepped processes. Data from 60 developing countries suggest that after leaving school, youth spend an average of 1.4 years in temporary or intermittent work and spells of unemployment before permanently entering stable employment. In some instances, it can take longer than four years. Although less-skilled youth tend to have more difficulties in entering labour markets than highly educated youth, the latter also experience high unemployment rates in many countries.[10] In addition to unemployment rates, other labour market dimensions (such as the quality of work) are important to assess the ease or difficulty for young people to integrate themselves into the labour market. For example, transitions may involve temporary or non-career jobs and informal contracts. As mentioned above, youth unemployment and underemployment jeopardize employment prospects later in life. When jobless youth cannot access productive options, they are more likely to enter activities damaging to themselves and society. Target 7.2 therefore seeks to develop and implement national policies to promote the transition between education and decent and productive employment.

42. Self-employment is an important form of income-generating activity. Some young people become entrepreneurs out of necessity, others by opportunity. Whatever the reason, young entrepreneurs face a variety of obstacles to creating and growing a business, including access to information, financing, formal networks, clients, suppliers and skilled workers.[10] Youth lack the experience and collateral of adults, and may not have had the opportunity to acquire business skills. In many countries, HIV/AIDS and conflicts are decimating the knowledge and skill base in many communities, leaving youth entrepreneurs without traditional mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities. Business development services to fill the gap are not always readily available. Target 7.3 therefore urges the development and implementation of national policies by 2015 to ensure that information, knowledge and financial services are available to potential youth entrepreneurs.

D. Challenges involved in achieving the proposed goals and targets

43. Although the goals and targets proposed in the table and discussed above may seem ambitious, they are attainable. In order to achieve them, however, "business as usual" will not suffice. A determined push at the national and international levels is

needed to ensure that youth in the global economy are making progress. To achieve the proposed goals and targets, renewed commitment and a concerted effort may be required from United Nations agencies, civil society organizations (in particular youth-led organizations), the private sector, the international community and Governments.

44. United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes are actively promoting the youth development agenda and working to improve the well-being of youth. Their contribution will be crucial in reaching the proposed benchmarks. However, more coordination within the United Nations system is needed to ensure that limited resources are used most efficiently and that as many youth as possible are reached.

45. Civil society organizations are frequently the ones implementing the youth development agenda and ensuring that progress is made. Youth organizations in particular have done significant work to promote the well-being of youth in the global economy. Young people are thus not only the beneficiaries of the proposed goals and targets, but also key contributors in achieving them. Youth-led organizations require adequate funding to be able to undertake their work and offer the wide range of activities to youth that they are able to provide. Therefore, more efforts must be made by Governments and United Nations agencies to support these organizations and to work in partnership with them.

46. More emphasis is needed to involve the private sector in promoting the youth development agenda. The private sector helps shape globalization and influences the resulting benefits and costs; it is a key player in reducing poverty and producing the food necessary to curb hunger; its input into developing relevant curricula is crucial and, without the engagement of the private sector, efforts to stimulate employment creation will only have a limited effect. A greater focus is needed on the private sector's responsibility to promote young people's progress in the global economy and the advantages it can gain from doing so.

47. The World Programme of Action for Youth demonstrates the commitment of the international community to youth development. Translating this commitment into action will require technical and financial assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors to ensure that youth make progress in the global economy. Investing in youth is not only of importance for countries with large youth populations, but also for the wider international community. It helps stimulate stability and peace across borders and helps create a cohort of young adults able to add value to the global economy. This ensures that globalization is not a zero-sum game, but a process from which all can benefit.

48. Although other stakeholders play an important role in achieving the goals and targets proposed in the table, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring progress in youth development lies with Governments. Governments must develop strategies to achieve the proposed goals and targets. This not only requires concrete attainable propositions, but in some cases far-reaching reforms. Developing these strategies also implies that their cost is assessed and reflected in national budgets. While Governments may have other short-term priorities, they must realize that concrete efforts to achieve the proposed goals and targets are a strategic investment in a large segment of their populations and essential for the long-term development of their societies and countries.

49. As is the case for the United Nations system, there is also a need for more coordination among different levels of Government in promoting youth well-being and progress. The development of youth policies to achieve the goals and targets proposed also needs to be cross-sectoral, requiring coordination among a range of ministries with different portfolios, including youth, employment/labour, education, finance, agriculture and health.

50. The goals and targets proposed in the table are global in nature. Differences across countries will require that individual countries define contextually relevant and meaningful intermediate targets that enable them to reach the global benchmarks. In addition, severe gender and geographical disparities continue to exist in the four priority areas discussed above. Since data to monitor progress towards the proposed goals and targets tend to be national averages, they can mask important pockets of disadvantage. Some of the proposed targets may be achieved by focusing exclusively on male youth or urban youth. It is important that strategies to achieve the goals and targets take vulnerable groups into account. Besides young women and rural youth, these include, but are not limited to, youth living in slums, youth with disabilities, youth from ethnic minorities, migrant youth and youth affected by armed conflict.

51. The final challenge in implementing the proposed goals and targets concerns the monitoring process. Much of the data needed to assess progress is readily available from international organizations. However, in some cases, Governments may not yet have the required data and must gather it. This may require additional resources and support to build capacity of national statistics bureaus. Moreover, for data that are so far not compiled centrally by a specialized agency, methods for collecting data and appropriate responsible agencies need to be identified.

E. Recommendations

52. A variety of commitments have been made by Governments and the international community over the past 12 years to improve the well-being of youth. However, concrete benchmarks have been missing to identify whether progress has actually been achieved. The goals and targets presented in this report provide some meaningful quantitative benchmarks to energize the youth development agenda and monitor progress in four crucial areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth. In view of this, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations to:

(a) Recognize that countries are at different stages with respect to the development of youth and youth-specific policies and should take this into account when evaluating their progress in the context of the proposed goals and targets;

(b) Decide to adopt the proposed goals and targets as a means to monitor progress in young people's ability to benefit from globalization, as well as their development in the areas of poverty and hunger, education and employment;

(c) Encourage Governments, with the collaboration of the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, to design national youth policies with the objective of achieving the proposed goals and targets by analysing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

that may be present at the national level or using other comparable methods or techniques;

(d) Encourage Governments to work together with youth-led organizations and other stakeholders such as the private sector in order to achieve the proposed goals and targets;

(e) Call upon Governments and the international community to collect on a continuous basis youth-specific disaggregated data in the priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth;

(f) Urge countries to learn from each other how best to achieve the proposed goals and targets through the sharing of good practices, while recognizing that national specificities will require adaptation of successful policies;

(g) Urge Governments and the international community to develop institutional capacity and devise appropriate mechanisms for promoting the achievement of the goals and targets addressed in this report, as well as the broader goals of the World Programme of Action for Youth.